1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

Currently the Canadian government provides qualified medical attention for Indians at two hospitals, one for Yukon Indians in Whitehorse and another for Indians of British Columbia at Fort St. John. The former hospital is about three hundred miles from Lower Post, while the latter is about six hundred. To secure admission and permission for air travel to either hospital, the missionary or police must radio the Indian Agent at Telegraph Creek. Should the agent be away from his office, traveling in the performance of his duties, a reply to the wire giving authorization for transportation and hospitalization may be delayed for several days. Such delay occurred during the summer of 1945 in the case of a young victim of spinal meningitis. The boy was in delirium for three days before authorization was received to fly him to Whitehorse, where he died and was buried.

A nurse and physician employed by the Indian Affairs Branch visit the Indian community at Lower Post each summer and suggest medical or hospital treatment as required. The Mounted Police remain vigilant for evidence of venereal infection, and when a source of such disease is reported insist on the patient receiving prompt treatment. These precautionary attitudes contribute to the fact that the degree of venereal infection, despite the recent large influx of strangers, is relatively slight.

Native attitudes toward hospitalization vary. A number of men expressed admiration for the air forces' hospital at Watson Lake and also spoke well of the care they had received in the government hospital at Whitehorse. Other people severely criticized the regimen of public hospitals, some without themselves having been patients. Speaking of the Whitehorse institution, where he had gone to have a dislocated hip bone reset, Old Man claimed that the wards for white patients are superior to those reserved for Indians. Asked how he liked the hospital, he answered: "I didn't like it. You smell something." The odor, he said, reminded him of death and was absent in the white wards which he had casually visited. He admitted that the staff of the institution had "treated me fine." Another informant complained that the same hospital had starved his young daughter, feeding her only bread and water twice a day. He asserted that the hospital employs doctors at government expense who try to starve Indians to death.

Death

Death, the separation of body and soul, is a condition that usually results from old age and from serious illness or accident. In holding these notions of death, the Kaska are not stoic fatalists resigned to dying. For the individual, his family, and friends the final moment is to be avoided and delayed as long as possible. Death, a bad thing in the contemplation of which the Indian is never at ease, not only represents a tragedy for the deceased, but also introduces danger for the surviving members of the latter's family as well as other members of the community who may come into the orbit of the event.

The living organism represents a union of body and soul or, as the latter is referred to by the Kaska, wind.[*] Some people also reported the spiritual existence of the shadow, but did not clearly differentiate this concept from wind. Although death represents a final dissolution of the body-soul relationship, certain temporary alienations may occur without neces-

[*] Throughout this section the words "soul" (wind) and "spirit" will be used with certain definite meanings. The term soul refers to the spiritual attribute of the body. Upon death it becomes a spirit. The visible manifestation of a spirit is referred to as a "ghost."